



The Perception of Muslim Travellers of The Supporting Facilities of Halal Tourism in Kota Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perception of tourist muslim on infrastructure facilities to support halal tourism in Malaysia. The type of research used is qualitative descriptive research, with accidental sampling techniques, where the sample is Muslim tourists who were met at the time of the research. Data collection techniques used are interviews and documentation, then the data obtained are analyzed using descriptive methods to present the facts encountered during the research process. The results show that in terms of facilities, such as transportation, accommodation, food, places of worship are very easy to reach and support the implementation of halal tourism. In terms of supporting infrastructure has also been very good, seen from the smooth flow of transportation and communication for Muslim tourists in the city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. So, the perception of Muslim tourists on the facilities for supporting halal tourism in the City of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia has been very good and in accordance with the standard facilities for supporting halal tourism infrastructure, as well as increasing tourists' insight into Islamic culture in Southeast Asia.

Keywords: Perception, Muslim Travellers, Infrastructure, Halal Tourism, Kuala Lumpur

Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the contributors to local revenue (Iswandi, 2015; Hermon, 2016a). to the World Travel and Tourism Council in 2016, income from tourism spending accounted for 9.8 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), one of the countries that were heavily involved in tourism development was Malaysia. Malaysia's tourism sector since the 1990s is the second largest industry contributing to Malaysia's state revenue (Kamarudin and Hairul. 2012; Erianjoni and Ikhsan, 2017). Seeing this fact the Malaysian government focuses on developing the tourism sector, including the arrangement of tourism objects, making travel packages, and promoting Malaysian tourism to various countries in the world (Agustina, 2011; Hermon, 2016b; Hermon, 2017). But, one of the concerns of Malaysian tourism at present is Muslim tourists who have great potential to develop and the increasing demand from Muslim tourists, the trend of Muslim tourists is increasingly growing where demand and curiosity continues to increase from year to year (Hermon, 2010; Kamarudin and Hairul, 2012; Hermon, 2012), so the Malaysian government also offered by introducing halal tour packages. Even though it continues to increase, there are still various issues and challenges that must be faced by the Malaysian government in building halal tourism (Ahmad *et al.*, 2011; Hermon, 2015).



Malaysia is one of the countries that has a variety of very interesting tourist destinations. The Government through the Malaysian Tourist Ministry has made various efforts at the inter-country level to attract more tourists from abroad to realize the development of Malaysia as a world-famous tourist destination. After being hit by the economic crisis in 1997, the Government of Malaysia has been developing the tourism sector as an alternative to restoring the country's economy, one of them with Malaysia having been ranked 16th in terms of tourism revenue and controlling 2% of global market share in 2008, plus the tourism industry has clouded 1.7 million workers or nearly 16% of the number of job seekers in 2008. This is also coupled with changes in patterns of movement of tourists after the events of September 11, 2001, in New York United States (Rahman and Mohd Fauzi, 2010). Muslim tourists, especially from Arab countries and countries on the African continent, have changed from usually interested in visiting European countries or America to move to Southeast Asian countries, one of which is Malaysia. Statistical data shows the number of tourists from Saudi Arabia to Malaysia in 2001 as many as 39,957 thousand people and increased in 2002 as many as 45,007 thousand people (Idris and Uzmat, 2012).

Tourists and tourism have a different purpose, where tourism is defined as leaving a place of residence to an area with a specific purpose and having the intention to return to its place of origin (Ali and Fatimah, 2010), while tourists are often associated with foreigners who have tourist restrictions, namely the purpose of the trip, the distance/limit of travel, the duration or time of travel, the place of residence of the person who made the trip (Pitana, 2009). Halal Tourism can be defined as tourism and hospitality made by producers in accordance with the teachings of Islam (Razzaq *et al.*, 2015) to attract consumers (tourists). There are three categories in halal tourism, namely; food, lifestyle and service (Winata package, finance, transportation) (Zulkifli *et al.*, 2011). As a country with a Muslim-majority population (61.3%), Malaysia has the potential to attract Muslim tourists, this is evidenced by the election of Malaysia as the first halal tourism country in the world for eight consecutive years based on the results of the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) for 2018 (Diakonia, 2018). This shows that Malaysia is the number one country in the world in the halal tourism sector.

Tourism facilities and infrastructure are one of the important elements in forming tourism products that play a role in supporting the ease and comfort of tourists during a tour. Tourism infrastructure is a complete tourist destination that is needed to serve the needs of tourists in enjoying their tour. Included in tourism infrastructure are: transportation infrastructure, power plant installations and clean water installations, oil refinery installations, irrigation or water systems, banking and monetary systems, telecommunications systems, health infrastructure, security infrastructure while those included in tourism facilities are: travel companies, transportation companies, hotels and other types of accommodation, bars, restaurants, catering, and other catering services, tourist attractions, souvenir shops and craft centers (Bagyono, 2005), where all infrastructure facilities must be tailored to the needs of Muslim tourists who visit because not all Muslim tourists need the same facilities and infrastructure. Based on the introduction above, the purpose of this study was to analyze the perception of Muslim tourists on the facilities and infrastructure to support halal tourism in Malaysia.

Method

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative research, to analyze the perception of Muslim tourists on the facilities to support halal tourism. The method used in this study is a descriptive method in the form of an overview of facts found in the field which is then elaborated with the words in the opinion of the respondent, as is in accordance with the research question, then analyzed (Hermon *et al.*, 2008). The population in this study were Muslim tourists who visited Malaysia, with sampling techniques, namely accidental techniques, namely the accidental sampling technique encountered at the time the research was carried out. Data collection techniques used are through interviews and documentation, interviews are carried out to tourist converts to obtain data in accordance with the research objectives.

Results and Discussion

Tourism can be defined as a series of activities that aim to relax, business, religion and health in a short time in an area (Masron *et al.* 2015; Umar, 2017). The tourism sector is one of the important sectors in

the Malaysian economy which then made the tourism sector the fifth largest sector in Malaysia in 2010 based on the State Design Unit. Although at the beginning of independence the government had not yet glanced at this sector, because at that time the government was more focused on developing the country's infrastructure and resisting threats from communists (Mahmud, 2009). It was not until the 70s that the tourism sector experienced a positive development, this was marked by the arrival of tourists to Malaysia, which increased from 23,000 in 1961 to 77,000 in 1970 (Marzuki, 2010). The Government of Malaysia also continues to provide a high commitment to building and developing the tourism industry in Malaysia. Halal tourism is a product that for some people is quite new for some tourists, but this product continues to experience an increase and interest from global tourists. Buildings, ceremonies, celebrations and religious activities are the main attractions for tourists who embrace religion (Henderson, 2003). Halal tourism is currently receiving considerable attention after the events of September 11, 2001 in which Islam was labeled as a terrorist religion and changed the world's perception of Islam, so that later terms such as "Islamophobia" and others emerged (Christopher Allan, Jorge, Nielse, 2002). However, this later made a new paradigm for halal tourism and received great attention from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), where member countries were heavily promoting the tourism of their respective countries. And after the event, OIC members also realized that the tourism sector is a sector that has an important role in the country's economy.

Halal tourism is generally divided into three main concepts, namely from the point of view of economics, culture and religion (Hamarnah A, Steiner C, 2004; Suasti *et al*, 2018). According to the economic point of view, the halal tourism industry has a goal to develop tourism within the Islamic world, build new tourist attracting destinations and to strengthen cooperation between countries and institutions between Islamic countries. The concept of halal tourism from a cultural point of view focuses more on developments that provide halal tourism programs for tourists to travel to Islamic historical relics where Muslim and non-Muslim tourists visit. Halal tourism according to religious perspectives brings the concept of adjusting the tourism industry that follows the teachings that are brought by Islam including the different spaces for men and women, alcohol-free areas, activities with Islamic tadpoles and the application of Islamic financial transaction systems (Hasan, 2007). There are eight standard factors for halal tourism measurement in terms of administration and management: (1) service to tourists must be in accordance with the overall Muslim principles; (2) guides and staff must have discipline and respect for Islamic principles; (3) regulating all activities of gar does not conflict with Islamic principles; (4) buildings must be in accordance with Islamic principles; (5) restaurants must follow international standards of halal services: (6) transportation services must have a good security system; (7) there are places provided for Muslim tourists to conduct diversity activities; and (8) traveling to places that do not conflict with Islamic principles (Chukaew in Alim, 2015). Based on the characteristics of halal tourism, there are five important aspects that must be considered as facilities and infrastructure to support halal tourism; (1) location; the application of the Islamic system in the area of tourism, meaning that tourist sites must be in accordance with Islamic principles and can enhance the spiritual values of tourists; (2) transportation; implementation of systems, such as separation of seats between men and women who are not mahram in accordance with Islamic law and for the convenience of tourists; (3) restaurants; Islam is very concerned about the halal food, halal here both from its nature, origin and management. In addition, several studies have shown that tourist interest in food has a major role in choosing tourist destinations, (4) accommodation; including all work processes and facilities that are adjusted must be in accordance with Sharia principles; and (5) places of worship; for Muslims worship is a must, one of which is the five daily prayers.

Tourism infrastructure is something that is considered enough by tourists before making a tour (Muljadi, 2009). The tourism supporting facilities and infrastructure are as follows; (1) Tourism Infrastructure; is all facilities support so that tourism facilities can live and float and can provide services to tourists to meet their diverse needs, among others; (a) transportation infrastructure, such as the road network and the railroad network, airports, ports, land transport terminals and train stations; (b) banking and monetary systems; (c) telecommunications systems, such as telephone, internet, post, television and radio; and (d) health and safety services. (2) Tourism Facilities; are companies that provide services to tourists, either directly or indirectly, such as; (a) travel company; (b) tourist transport companies; (c) accommodation company; (d) eating and drinking companies; (e) tourist or entertainment attraction companies; and (f) sensory companies or art shops

In terms of halal tourism infrastructure, such as transportation infrastructure is very good and easy to access. Muslim tourists agree that, on land, sea and air, the city of Kuala Lumpur has the maximum transportation infrastructure, although some Muslim tourists are still disturbed by congestion which still often occurs especially during working hours but overall they are very satisfied with the accessibility available there, and they also added that it was very easy to access the accessibility. Furthermore, banking infrastructure is also easy to find, especially ATMs that can be found everywhere in the City of Kuala Lumpur, then for Muslim tourists who run out of local money can exchange it through a money changer which can also be found in sharing the corner of Kuala Lumpur City. Therefore, Muslim tourists from Middle Eastern, European or American countries laughingly stated that they were not worried about their financial situation while on a tour in Kuala Lumpur, in contrast to Muslim tourists from around Southeast Asia, like Indonesia, they claimed that they provided considerable money from their home country for fear of lacking money there. This is because they lack understanding about how to take the system or exchange money in Malaysia. Thus, it can be concluded that banking infrastructure has spread in various places in Kuala Lumpur, only the majority of Muslim tourists do not know how the banking system in Malaysia. Judging from the telecommunications system, Muslim tourists agree that telecommunications work very well in Kuala Lumpur, both in terms of smooth telecommunication, internet networks are already fast enough. And the tourists also added that it was very easy to buy a new sim card that could be used while in Kuala Lumpur, and tourists also suggested that they could find many places in Kuala Lumpur that provided free internet facilities with a wifi system, although there were some Muslim tourists who commented that internet package prices are quite expensive, with minimal internet quota plus a short validity period. However, overall Muslim tourists are satisfied with the transportation infrastructure provided by the Malaysian government, although most say they have never seen an existing television channel or heard a radio broadcasting in Kuala Lumpur because most Muslim tourists do not stay more than seven days in Kuala Lumpur, so they say they don't pay much attention to this, plus internet access is very easy, so to find the latest information, they can find it only with a smartphone. And for health infrastructure, Muslim tourists whom researchers met said that they had never tried but from several sources they saw or heard that Kuala Lumpur was one of the countries with the best health infrastructure, they also added that it was not difficult to find a hospital there, then for security infrastructure, Muslim tourists agree that they feel very safe while in Kuala Lumpur and add that the city is also very clean even though there are still some scattered garbage but overall it is very clean, safe and also convenient to visit plus halal attractions offered a variety and conditions for the culture and development of Islam in Malaysia. So, it can be concluded that the halal tourism infrastructure in Kuala Lumpur has been very good.

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted it is known that in terms of halal tourism facilities, seen from service companies or commonly called travel bureaus are very easy to find and can also be accessed via the internet, but based on interviews with Muslim tourists it is known that most tourists come to Malaysia without use travel agency services because they say that all information about Malaysia can be easily accessed via the internet so they do not use these services, there are also Muslim tourists who come for the second time to Malaysia claiming on the first visit using one of the existing travel agencies and they said that the travel agency they use has a very satisfying service. Also, a group of Muslim tourists said that they used the services of a travel agency only to order tickets to return to their country or to take care of some problems related to their trip while in Kuala Lumpur. From the means of tourist transportation companies have also been very good, according to the tourist's transportation in Kuala Lumpur varies greatly and is very easy to access and use. Especially for tourists who travel without a travel agency must know the type of transportation that must be used to get to the destination. However, so far they have not found any obstacles related to the use of transportation coupled with the many Center services so that if they get lost or do not know the way they can immediately ask. And for tourists who do not want to bother using public transportation, can use existing online transportation such as Grab or MyCar which only requires a smartphone to access it, tourists only need to book via smartphone, but some Muslim tourists prefer to use public transportation because according to them visit new areas without trying public transportation in the area then their tour will be felt less. However, they said that they had not found public transportation that separated the space between male and female passengers. However, overall they are very happy and satisfied with the transportation provider company in Kuala Lumpur. Furthermore, for accommodation companies, Muslim tourists said that they did not pay too much attention to the place where the accommodation was

halal or not, but more in terms of cleanliness and also the price offered by the inn itself. According to them, the most important thing is cleanliness and comfort while staying there. There are also some Muslim tourists who indeed live in hotels that are a halal status that they find through the internet. This shows that Kuala Lumpur provides a variety of accommodation that can be found in sharing areas in Kuala Lumpur, only the tastes of each Muslim traveller who decides to stay in the place as expected. Then, for food and beverage companies is the most important thing for Muslim tourists, this is also one of their reasons for visiting Malaysia, they say it is not difficult to find halal food in Malaysia and they are everywhere with a variety of typical foods, oriental or even western halal-certified ones can be found cheaply, depending on the pretensions of the tourists themselves. And they also added that Malaysia has a very delicious taste and they want to continue to eat it again. Furthermore, the most important thing of a tour is the place or tourist attraction itself, Muslim tourists say that there are many tourist attractions that can be visited in Kuala Lumpur, especially if related to the history and culture of Islam in Malaysia and almost all the attractions there are friendly and safe for Muslim tourists, for example in Batu Caves, although it is not one of the halal tours offered by Malaysia, this tourism object can also be visited by Muslim tourists to take pictures and there is also halal food available. And souvenir companies are also a means that is no less important for tourists visiting a country, according to them this is also one proof that they have set foot in the country. In Kuala Lumpur, there are various kinds of souvenir shops that are friendly to Muslim tourists, one of the most famous of which is Central Market, Muslim tourists say that it is very easy to find places that offer Malaysian cypress and the price is very affordable. And other important facilities are places of worship, according to Muslim tourists in Kuala Lumpur there are many places of worship, such as mosques but to reach the mosque takes a long time, so most tourists.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of interviews conducted on Muslim tourists' perceptions of the facilities for supporting halal tourism in the City of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, it can be concluded that Kuala Lumpur City in terms of infrastructure has been very good and has supported the growth and development of halal tourism, such as transportation infrastructure that has been very modern and easy to find and use, then banking infrastructure is also very easy to find with friendly service, from telecommunication infrastructure is also very smooth with 4G LTE internet access, and security is also very guaranteed and there are various kinds of modern and easily accessible health facilities. Furthermore, in terms of halal tourism support facilities in the city of Kuala Lumpur it has also been very good, where there are various types of companies that provide services, such as travel agents, although most Muslim tourists who are met do not use travel agency services they say that it is very easy to find Travel agents, then in terms of transportation, transportation providers in Malaysia are also very easily accessible, although Muslim tourists say transportation has not yet been found that separates male and female passengers. For accommodation and halal food is very easy to find in the city of Kuala Lumpur, and in terms of places of workshop, the city of Kuala Lumpur has several large mosques and also a small mosque. So, the perception of Muslim tourists towards the means of supporting halal tourism infrastructure in the city of Kuala Lumpur has been very good and supports tourists to understand Islamic culture in the Southeast Asian region.

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